

Annual Tox-Away Day

Sponsor/Contact

Allen County Solid Waste District
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Summary

Annual HHW collection day for an urban, single-county district of 302,000 population. A minimum gate fee of \$5 is charged for routine household quantities.

Start date/hours

First held in 1990, the 1994 event drew 740 cars. Collection hours are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Cost

Chemical Waste Management, Inc. successful bidder to manage the 1993 program, had its contract renewed for the 1994 program. In 1993, CWM's bid was \$27,990 to process 15,155 pounds of material, or \$1.85 per pound.

Program Description

Tox-away days have been held annually since 1990 in Fort Wayne, the first two years under city auspices and since then under sponsorship of the Allen County Solid Waste District. Participation has been increasing steadily. At Tox-Away Day 1994, on Saturday, September 10, 740 cars came through the collection site at 2911 Meyer Road, the parking lot of Navistar International, about 3 miles southeast of downtown Fort Wayne. Previous sites have been the sewage treatment plant parking lot and a hazardous waste landfill.

Choice of the industrial site for 1994 worked out especially well from the standpoint of traffic movement. Cars were in and out in about 5 minutes, much faster than anticipated. Careful planning of the site and traffic movement — logistics — is given the credit.

Another significant change from previous years concerned targeting of publicity. District staff believe the turnout for Allen County Tox-away Days has been less than the national average of 1% of households, and one step to increase participation has been to intensify publicity in selected areas. In advance of the 1994 event, in addition to general media coverage, a promotional mailing was sent to households in the northeast corner of Allen County. This tactic worked: participation from that section increased 47% over the previous year. By comparison, participation from the remainder of Allen County increased only 1.8%. In addition, churches have been identified as especially effective in conveying information about the HHW collection program. Asked how they heard about the event, many participants said the Information came in a church bulletin.

The following overview is condensed from the summary report of the 1993 Tox-Away Day sponsored by Allen County Solid Waste District:

Registration & Fee. Registration and a small fee is required: \$5 for up to 10 gallons of liquid waste and 50 lbs. of dry waste; and for quantities over those limits, an additional \$1 per gallon of additional liquid waste and every additional 5 lbs. of dry waste. Used motor oil, oil filters, and lead acid batteries are accepted at no charge. At the 1993 collection day, fees generated total revenue of \$2,349. (A copy of the registration form appears at the end of this case study.) The purpose of charging a fee is not so much to recover costs, since fees cover only a small part of costs, as to make the point that environmental protection services are not free and that everyone should contribute something.

Kinds of HHW accepted. All HHW is accepted with the exception of latex paints, explosives, radioactive, infectious, commercial, and industrial waste. Latex paints were dropped from the Allen County program after the first event. The rationale was two-fold. The volume of latex paints received increased costs by more than 100%. In addition, the risk to the environment posed by latex paints when disposed of in a solid state is questionable. For these reasons, the District does not foresee including latex paints in future collection days.

Site considerations. There must be ample room on the site for multiple lanes of traffic. In the 1994 program, there were five lanes of 1,300 feet - more car capacity than ever before. This generous amount of site capacity prevented any line-up of cars on the street, which is always a concern. In addition, the site must accommodate a staging area for HHW segregation and bulking; waste oil and lead acid battery collection; dumpsters for non-hazardous trash; a food staging area; and volunteer parking. In addition, the site must be fenced or otherwise very secure to protect the property from illegal dumping. (There was no fence at the Navistar site but adequate security was provided by three surveillance cameras and security guards on duty 24 hours.) Shelter and restrooms or portable toilets should also be provided. The site should be obtained at least six months in advance. It is desirable to obtain the site before issuing the RFPs to prospective contractors. **Do not publicize the location any sooner than 14 days before the event.** **The potential for illegal dumping is a problem otherwise.** It is important not to have any activity at the site on HHW Day other than HHW Day activity.

HHW Collection/Transportation/disposal These elements can be handled by a single company or separately by multiple companies. Evaluation of RFPs will determine which is better. Allen County has utilized free oil and lead-acid battery collection offered by local companies, and has bid out the disposal of other hazardous wastes.

Request for proposal. An RFP should be issued no later than 90 days before the event.

Bid evaluation. Bids are more easily evaluated if they are given in net-pound pricing. The bid for the most recent event was evaluated using the prior year's collection, in pounds. If several events have been held, the bids could be evaluated over an average of the amounts collected over all the prior years.

Food & refreshments. There should be food and refreshments for the volunteers throughout the day. Suggested food items are:

- Soft drinks
- Fried chicken Pizza
- Ice cream
- Ice
- Carrots and celery
- Cookies
- Donuts Coffee

Letters to potential food donors should be sent out a minimum of 90 days in advance of the event.

Food staging area and rest area. Some provision should be made for the rest and refreshment of the volunteers. One suggestion is the use of a tent with tables and chairs. If a building is available, that might provide some relief from the weather. If smoking is permitted, it should be a safe distance from the hazardous wastes being collected.

Volunteers. Volunteer organizations should be contacted at least 90 days in advance.

Security. Security personnel should be employed to eliminate illegal dumping and vandalism on the property upon the close of the event.

Traffic control. Retain the services of the police or another group authorized to provide traffic control on city or county streets. Barricades will be necessary, and traffic cones are suggested to delineate traffic lanes.

Neighborhood associations. Get Information to the neighborhood associations regarding HHW Day three months before the event so it can be published in their newsletters in advance.

Publicity/promotion. Send a news release to all media organizations, providing detailed information about the event. The first release should be distributed three weeks beforehand and should not include the location of the event (to keep "earlybirds" from making unexpected deliveries of HHW). Several days before the event it is timely for a second news release as well as a news conference to announce the site. The news conference should be held in a setting that provides photo/video opportunities. Fliers may be distributed through elementary school students, and posters can be displayed on community bulletin boards, in retail stores, and in public buildings. Invitational letters and posters also should be sent to all municipalities in the district.

Local grocery stores have cooperated by permitting an announcement of the HHW collection to be printed on grocery bags. In addition, two paid advertisements were published in local newspaper. One ad included a map to the collection site.

Supplies. Examples of supplies that may be needed at an HHW collection:

- Food service items including plates, cups, bowls, eating utensils, pizza servers, ice cream scoops, napkins
- Barrels for ice and soda
- Garbage bags
- First aid kit
- Carts for transporting materials from cars to the bulking area
- Pens and pencils for registration and survey
- Large spring clips to hold loose papers
- Vests to identify site personnel
- Class 3 personal protection supplies for the unloading crews

Money taking. Carpenters' aprons will be needed to hold money, registration forms, and receipt books. Other supplies include a moneybox and calculator. To safeguard cash, the responsibility for collecting money from money takers and the responsibility for collecting registration forms should not be assigned to the same person. As a cross-check on revenue, cash should be tallied separately from registrations.

Communications. All staff should be equipped with two-way radios. Signs are required to mark the entrance, exit, and direction of traffic flow. Signs also are needed to advise patrons to stay in their cars. If smoking is permitted, a smoking zone needs to be designated and marked.

Logistics

Someone should visit the site the day beforehand to make sure the area is ready for use as an HHW collection site. The locations of signs should be determined at this time. On collection day, some staff should arrive an hour in advance of opening to post signs and orient volunteers.

Volunteers and others can be organized for the following tasks:

Registration, flyer distribution. A minimum of two people suggested. Registration and fliers can be distributed beginning half an hour before opening to patrons who are already in line. Doing this will help to move the line through processing at opening time, which is customarily a rush period. Registration workers play a key role in keeping the line moving as smoothly as possible by preparing participants for what comes next - for example, asking them to follow directions of the traffic directors once inside the collection area; determining whether they are delivering motor oil, auto batteries, or anything else that will be taken before the HHW receiving area; and reminding participants about materials that are not accepted, such as latex paint.

On-site traffic directors. One or two people should be assigned to directing cars into the proper lanes, reminding participants not to smoke beyond a designated point, and to stay in their cars. Another person or persons should control the flow of traffic from the multiple lanes into the exit lane, keeping watch for the safety of any other site workers who may need to walk through the line of cars. Because participants often have questions about the HHW program at this point, a well-informed program person should be available.

Money takers. One person should be assigned per lane - with a designated back-up person, to eliminate unauthorized people from collecting money.

Unloading crews. Allen County Solid Waste District uses Fort Wayne and Allen County hazmat crews for this task. They inspect and evaluate materials, unload cars, and transfer materials to the bulking area.

Food servers. Food servers are responsible for preparing and serving food as well as supervising the food staging and rest area. Lunch logistics can be somewhat tricky because of shift changes. Some volunteers will have to work through the lunch hour.

End of the day. Among wrap-up tasks are the removal of signs and traffic control devices, balancing of cash receipts with registration forms, and signing of manifests, if necessary.

ALLEN COUNTY SOLID WASTE DISTRICT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TOX-AWAY DAY 1994 COMING SOON

The Allen County Solid Waste District is offering residents the chance to rid themselves of unwanted household hazardous chemicals without harming the environment.

The community's fifth Tox-Away Day will be held on Saturday, September 10, from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Residents are encouraged to bring household hazardous materials such as toxic household cleaners, health and beauty products, pesticides, automotive products, oil-based painting supplies, pool chemicals, photographic chemicals and fertilizers. Such materials should be properly disposed of to protect the environment and public health.

Residents should bring wastes in their original containers with the labels still intact. If the container is leaking, place it in a sealable, nonbreakable container. Household hazardous wastes should never be mixed together. Wastes that are incompatible with each other may react, ignite or explode.

All motor oil, oil filters and other automobile fluids will be accepted at the event free of charge. Residents may properly dispose of up to 10 gallons of liquid waste or 50 pounds of dry waste for a minimal fee of \$5.00. After that, there will be a \$1.00 fee for each additional gallon or 5 pounds of dry waste.

The fees collected during this event will be used to offset the cost of the program. "We estimate spending approximately \$70,000 to recycle and dispose of these dangerous chemicals," says Tony Burrus, District Director. Improper disposal methods, such as pouring chemicals down drains or toilets, can contaminate septic tanks or waste water treatment systems. Throwing chemicals into the trash can cause physical injury to sanitation workers, children and pets and contaminate landfills.

Items collected at this event will be recycled whenever possible; otherwise, they will be properly treated and either disposed of in a hazardous waste landfill or incinerated.

Latex paint will not be accepted at Tox-Away Day. Instead, let latex paint air dry completely and dispose of it with regular trash pick-up. To speed up the drying process, add kitty litter or another type of absorbent.

Other materials not accepted include household batteries, explosives, radioactive material, infectious waste and industrial hazardous waste. For more information contact the Allen County Solid Waste District at 428-7878.

NOTEA press conference to announce the location will be held on Thursday,

September 1, 8:30 a.m., at 109 E. Superior Street upstairs.